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nearly 50 per cent. of the wage-earners, it draws the conclusion "that to show the ups and downs of trade, it is a legitimate method to leave out of account 60,000 odd small establishments and confine attention to a comparatively few large enterprises." While such method may be proper enough for some purposes, in order to discover the average earnings, wages, or working time—which the report does not attempt to do—it hardly seems legitimate to exhibit the percentage of increase in the amount of wages paid in a few rapidly-growing establishments as indicating the general increase in business activity and improvement in trade conditions. On page 1170 the report presents a table showing the number of employees and total amount of wages paid from 1890 to 1899 in 66 of the larger establishments principally in the iron and steel industry. To bring out in a clearer form the striking improvement in 1899 over previous years, the wages for each year are compared with the average of the period as a base line; 1890 and 1891 standing at 98, and 1899 at 127, as against 100, seemingly indicate an increase of nearly 30 per cent. But no account is taken of the amount of wages paid during the earlier years in the smaller establishments that may have been absorbed by the larger ones or driven out of business. Thus we have a plausible demonstration of the truth of the statement in the preface that "the amount paid in wages in 1899 surpassed the prosperous year 1892."

Such statistics can have only a qualified value to economic students. It is to be regretted that such good opportunities as this bureau has for statistical research should be vitiated by slipshod methods, and that scientific work should be hampered by political considerations.

H. L. BLISS.

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### THE CENSUS OF PORTO RICO.<sup>1</sup>

THE *Report on the Census of Porto Rico*, which has just appeared under the auspices of the war department, is practically identical in plan with the *Report on the Census of Cuba*, reviewed in the last issue of this JOURNAL. The preliminary field-work in both cases was done by native enumerators and supervisors working under the direction of an experienced official of the American census office, but the tables were compiled and the explanatory text was written in Washington.

<sup>1</sup> *Report on the Census of Porto Rico*, 1899. J. P. Sanger, director; Henry Gannett, Walter F. Willcox, statistical experts. Washington, 1900.

Mr. Henry Gannett and Professor W. F. Willcox were associated with General Sanger in the preparation of both reports, and as they naturally followed the same methods in dealing with the Porto Rican as with the Cuban returns it is unnecessary to add anything regarding the conscientious thoroughness of their analysis to what has already been said in these pages. Some of their results, however, merit attention.

Porto Rico differs from Cuba most strikingly in the density of her population. She has nearly a million people (953,243) living in an area only about three times the size of Long Island (3606 square miles). That is, there are, on an average, 264 inhabitants for every square mile of territory. This is a density more than seven times that of Cuba, and — what may surprise Americans more — three times that of Illinois in 1890. The people are distributed very evenly over the different parts of the island and there are no great agglomerations of population in cities. San Juan, the most considerable town, has only 32,048 souls, and the total urban population is but 8.7 per cent. of the whole. The corresponding figures for the United States and Cuba are 29.2 and 32.3 per cent. respectively.<sup>1</sup>

Almost as striking as the density of the population is its youthfulness. The median age in Porto Rico is only 18.1 years; that is, half of the population is younger and half is older than this. In Cuba the median age is 20.7, and in the United States 21.9 years. Of course this indicates a short average duration of life, which the report attributes to "unsanitary conditions, ignorance regarding care for the health, and poverty, all of which are widely prevalent among certain classes" (p. 49). There is clearly a high birth rate, for in no American state is the number of children under ten so great in proportion to the whole population; but there must also be a correspondingly high death rate, for the population is not growing at a rapid rate. The increase for the decade ending 1899 was 16 per cent., while the population of the United States increased 21 per cent. between 1890 and 1900.

Race conditions in Porto Rico seem, if one may judge from the statistics, to be analogous to those of our southern states — 38.2 per cent. of the population are colored. This is rather more than in Cuba, where the colored form 33.1 per cent., but less than in any of the coast states, from Virginia to Louisiana — except North Carolina. In South Carolina,

<sup>1</sup> In this and the subsequent comparisons the data for the United States refer to 1890 except when otherwise stated.

for example, the persons of negro descent constitute almost 60 per cent. of the population, and in certain West Indian islands, for instance Jamaica, the proportion rises well above 90 per cent. It must be said also that the whites seem to be gaining ground upon the colored; eighty years ago they made but four ninths of the population as compared with three fifths at present. Perhaps the best explanation of this is to be found in the age statistics of the two races. The median age of the colored is half a year less than that of the whites. Apparently the colored people succumb to filth, ignorance, and poverty even sooner than their Caucasian neighbors.

The statistics of conjugal condition present the anomaly noticed in those of Cuba. A large number of people are living together although they are not legally man and wife. Indeed, the number of these irregular unions is more than half as great as that of regular marriages. Of course these consensual connections are much more numerous among the colored than among the whites; of the former 12.0 per cent. are married and 11.8 per cent. are living together by mutual consent. But even if both forms of union are counted the proportion of persons in the marriage relation is very small—only 25.4 per cent. of the population as compared with 35.7 per cent. in the United States.

In respect of education Porto Rico seems to be even more backward than is Cuba. Only 8 per cent. of the children of school age are attending school, and of persons over nine years of age less than a quarter are able to read. In Cuba the illiterates were 57 per cent. of the population over nine; in Porto Rico they are 77 per cent. Here again, of course, the colored make the worse showing; but the report on schools shows how entirely inadequate is the educational system for meeting the needs even of the whites.

The statistics of occupations are of interest mainly as showing how entirely Porto Rico is dependent on agriculture. Over three fifths of the bread-winners are engaged in extractive industries and less than one twelfth in mechanical pursuits or in trade and transportation. Children are set to work at an earlier age than in the United States; but women undertake remunerative occupations much less frequently. Female workers seem to find fewer openings outside of those furnished by domestic service of various kinds.

Because of its predominance agriculture was the only industry made the subject of a special investigation. Though the scope of inquiry was not wide it sufficed to develop some very interesting

results ; 21 per cent. of the entire island was found to be under cultivation. This is a much larger proportion than in Cuba, where only 3 per cent. is cultivated. Even in the United States the land is less fully utilized, for according to the census of 1890 only 16 per cent. of the total area is cultivated.

Most of the farms are small ; the average size does not exceed forty-five acres as against 137 acres in the United States and 142 in Cuba. The great majority of these little farms are owned by their occupants, for only 6 per cent. are rented. Coffee is much the most important crop, as 41 per cent. of the cultivated area is devoted to it. Sugar cane and bananas are next in importance ; the one occupies 15 and the other 14 per cent. of the cultivated area. It will perhaps surprise the smoking public, which has heard so much recently of Porto Rican cigars, to learn that tobacco is but little grown in the island. According to the report it occupies less than a fortieth of the area given over to coffee.

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